



Government of Bermuda

Ministerial Statement

To The Senate

By

Senator Jason Hayward, JP

Junior Minister of Education and Workforce Development

A National Workforce Development Plan for Bermuda

Wednesday, July 4th, 2018

Madam President,

It gives me great pleasure this morning to share with my Colleagues the Report entitled, “A National Workforce Development Plan for Bermuda”. My Honourable colleagues will be aware that the Government’s 2017 Election Platform committed to “Create a National Workforce Development Plan in collaboration with key stakeholders, to ensure that Bermudians are properly prepared to take advantage of both current and future job opportunities”. Additionally, this Government committed to ensuring skill shortages across different occupational groups are addressed, and that training options exist on-island to equip Bermudians for the workforce today and in the future. The creation of a National Workforce Development Plan was also announced as one of the Government’s 2017 Throne Speech initiatives.

Madam President,

Accordingly, six high level strategic priorities were identified to shape the terms of reference for the Working Group, and to drive the design, content and structure of the National Workforce Development Plan for Bermuda. These strategic priorities included:

- (1) Employer and Industry Engagement;
- (2) Alignment of the Workforce Development System;
- (3) Creation of Career Pathways;
- (4) Development of Youth Workforce Programmes;

- (5) Universal Access to Education, Training and Career Services;
and,
- (6) Government Resources and Funding.

Madam President,

In January 2018, the National Workforce Development Plan Working Group was established as a non-statutory committee reporting directly to the Minister of Education and Workforce Development. The Working Group, which was chaired by myself, included representatives from the Departments of Education and Workforce Development, and the Bermuda College.

Madam President,

In February 2017, several of the working group members participated in an International Visitor Leadership Exchange Program; a ten-day professional exchange sponsored by the United States Consulate to examine workforce development. As such, members who had already acquired this relevant knowledge and understanding were key in providing input for the execution of the overall mandate of the Working Group, which was to review the six strategic priorities and develop strategic and operational plans to support the implementation of each priority. The Working Group was also tasked with:

- making recommendations to improve efficiency and to reduce duplication of services within the workforce development system;
- proposing legislative changes for the creation of a Workforce Development Board; and,
- developing a report by March 31st, 2018 for submission to the Minister of Education and Workforce Development.

Madam President,

This year, during the month of January, a Fulbright Specialist was invited to Bermuda for six weeks. Their visit was in response to an offer to the Department of Workforce Development from the United States Consulate and Fulbright Program, which is a United States academic exchange program. The US Fulbright Program provides short-term exchange experiences for persons to tackle discrete and rapid response projects.

The Workforce Development Specialist possessed over twenty years' experience in project management, career path development, and business systems analysis for private, non-profit and public sector organizations. During the exchange, the Specialist assisted in facilitating meetings held by the Working Group, and in the development of the National Workforce Development Plan.

Madam President,

The Specialist also met with several stakeholders to understand Bermuda's workforce needs, chronic challenges, and the current state of Bermuda's labour market. They took the opportunity to meet with the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation, the Bermuda Chamber of Commerce, the Bermuda Business Development Agency, and the Bermuda College. They also interacted with students in the Career Pathways programme at the Cedarbridge Academy. Information obtained through all meetings and discussions helped to develop a comprehensive Workforce Development Plan for Bermuda.

Madam President,

In February this year, a report of the National Workforce Development Plan was presented to the Minister of Education and Workforce Development ahead of the required deadline. The Plan is structured into both strategic and operational plans for each of the six high level priorities. Also included is a technology plan for the workforce development system.

Madam President,

Some of the recommendations in the National Workforce Development Plan include:

- the formation of a Workforce Development Board comprising industry partners;
- the creation of an Employer Liaison Officer post within the Department of Workforce Development;
- development of formal agreements with the business community identifying experiential learning for students;
- replacement of the current National Training Board Act with a Workforce Development Board Act;
- transition the Department of Workforce Development and Community Education Development Program into a One Stop Career Centre;
- develop a process to identify high demand Career Pathways across emerging industries;

- develop and implement age appropriate learning activities for primary, middle and senior level students;
- Establish an Education Officer for Technical and Vocational Education in the Department of Education;
- Increase programme offerings at the Bermuda College in response to current and future job market/industry demands;

Madam President,

It is important to note that several of these recommendations align directly with recommendations emanating from an operational and organizational review of the Department of Workforce Development between August and November 2016, which was undertaken by the Government's Management Consulting Section (MCS). The MCS Review found that there was no direct connection between the National Training Plan (which only focused on training) and the work of the Department of Workforce Development. In this regard, the National Workforce Development Plan is more comprehensive than the National Training Plan. It provides for the development of career pathways using a customer-centered approach for all Bermudians ranging from our middle level school students to persons seeking employment.

The overall purpose of the MCS Review was to clarify the mandate and goals of the Department. The National Workforce Development Plan has fulfilled that purpose and will steer the strategic direction of the Department for the next two to three years.

Madam President,

In closing, let me say that the National Workforce Development Plan will essentially lay the foundation for a 21st Century Workforce Development System in Bermuda. It is critically important to have a National Workforce System for which the primary aim is to connect people with jobs. This Plan will provide the opportunities to prepare Bermudians with the requisite skills to enter the job market and introduce our young people to the world of work.

The general public can obtain a copy of the National Workforce Development Plan from the Department's website at www.dwd.bm.

Madam President,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the former United States Consul General for Bermuda, Mary Ellen Koenig, for the invitation of professional and academic exchanges; Fulbright Specialist and Dean of Workforce, Piedmont Virginia Community College, Valerie Palamountain; and members of the National Workforce Development Plan Working Group: Mr. George Outerbridge; Mrs. Pandora Glasford; Ms. Judy Lowe-Teart; Mr. LeVar Bassett; Dr. Radell Tankard; Ms. Tawana Flood; Ms. Tammy Richardson and Dr. Trescot Wilson.

Madam President,

It was this group of professionals who came together as a team, presented ideas, engaged in lengthy discussions, and made valuable contributions that birthed the formulation of Bermuda's first National Workforce Development Plan – preparing and connecting Bermudians with jobs!

Thank you Madam President.